

JANUARY 26, 1978

SOUTH AFRICA: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BANNED

ANNCR:

IN SOUTH AFRICA, AT LEAST ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-THREE PEOPLE ARE BANNED....OFFICIALLY SILENCED BY ORDER OF THE PRETORIA GOVERNMENT. VOA'S BARRY WOOD EXPLAINS WHAT THIS UNIQUE FORM OF PUNISHMENT ENTAILS.

VOICE:

PEOPLE ARE BANNED---USUALLY FOR FIVE YEARS, BUT OFTEN FOR MUCH LONGER---FOR ALLEGED ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. BEING BANNED MEANS BEING A KIND OF NON PERSON. HE OR SHE CANNOT BE QUOTED IN THE PRESS, CANNOT ENTERTAIN MORE THAN ONE VISITOR AT A TIME, CANNOT LEAVE THE MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT IN WHICH THEY LIVE, MUST REPORT TO A POLICE STATION ONCE A WEEK, AND MAY NOT ATTEND PUBLIC GATHERINGS OR VISIT A NEWSPAPER OFFICE OR AN INSTITUTION OF LEARNING.

WINNIE MANDELA--A FORTY-THREE-YEAR OLD SOUTH AFRICAN--IS AMONG THE BANNED. SHE IS THE WIFE OF THE IMPRISONED AFRICAN NATIONALIST LEADER NELSON MANDELA. A STRONG OPPONENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S RACE LAWS, WINNIE MANDELA HAS BEEN UNDER BANNING ORDERS FOR MOST OF HER ADULT LIFE.

LAST YEAR, MISSUS MANDELA'S BANNING ORDER WAS SEVERELY TIGHTENED. SHE WAS LITERALLY BANISHED FROM HER SOWETO HOME, TO A TINY VILLAGE IN THE PROVINCE CALLED THE ORANGE FREE STATE OVER THREE HUNDRED KILOMETERS AWAY. THERE, IN THE BLACK DISTRICT OF THE VILLAGE OF BRANDFORT, SHE LIVES IN A THREE ROOM HOUSE WITHOUT ELECTRICITY OR INDOOR PLUMBING. SHE MUST BE INSIDE HER HOME FROM DUSK TO DAWN AND ALL THE TIME WEEKENDS. EARLIER THIS MONTH SHE WAS PLACED ON TRIAL FOR HAVING ALLEGEDLY BROKEN THE

TERMS OF HER BANNING ORDER. THE COURT WILL RENDER ITS JUDGMENT FEBRUARY NINTH. IF CONVICTED, SHE COULD BE SENT TO PRISON FOR FIFTEEN YEARS.

DURING A BREAK IN THE COURT PROCEEDINGS, MISSUS MANDELA DISCUSSED WITH A FOREIGN JOURNALIST WHAT IT MEANT TO BE BANNED.

SHE SAID, "ITS LITERALLY A LIVING GRAVE. ONE LOSES TOUCH. I KEEP MY SANITY BY READING." AND SHE CONTINUED: "MY HOUSE WAS AN ANNEX OF THE POLICE STATION -- IT WAS AN OPERATIONAL AREA. THEY WOULD COME INTO MY HOUSE AT ANY TIME AND EVEN LOOK UNDER THE BED." ASKED ABOUT THE FUTURE, MISSUS MANDELA REPLIED: "THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID. THE PEOPLE KNOW. WE ARE HEADING FOR GRIMMER TIMES AHEAD. THE AFRIKANER IS GOING MORE AND MORE INTO THE LAAGER (AN OX WAGON ENCLOSURE). THERE IS GOING TO BE A RACIAL WAR."

DONALD WOODS IS THE WHITE FORMER EDITOR OF THE EAST LONDON DAILY DISPATCH IN CAPE PROVINCE. HE LIVED UNDER A BANNING ORDER FOR TWO MONTHS LATE LAST YEAR. JUST BEFORE NEW YEAR'S DAY, MISTER WOODS, WITH HIS WIFE AND FIVE CHILDREN FLED THE COUNTRY. HE DESCRIBES THE EFFECT OF HIS BANNING ORDER THIS WAY: "I WAS NOT ALLOWED TO BE WITH MORE THAN ONE PERSON AT A TIME EXCEPT MY WIFE AND CHILDREN. IF ONE OF MY CHILDREN BROUGHT A SCHOOL FRIEND INTO THE ROOM, I HAD TO GO OUT, OR THE CHILD OR SCHOOL FRIEND HAD TO GO OUT. I COULD NOT WRITE. AT FIRST THEY SAID I COULD PLAY GOLF OR SINGLES TENNIS, THEN THEY SAID THAT GOLF WAS OUT EVEN WITH ONE OTHER PLAYER BECAUSE A CADDIE WOULD BE A THIRD PERSON, CONSTITUTING AN ILLEGAL GATHERING."

MISTER WOODS SAYS THE SECURITY POLICE IN EAST LONDON TOLD HIM THAT THEY WOULD KNOW IF HE BROKE HIS BANNING ORDER AND THAT POLICE COULD COME INTO HIS HOME WITHOUT WARNING AT ANY TIME. MISTER WOODS SAYS HE HAS CLEAR INDICATIONS THAT HIS HOUSE, OFFICE AND CAR WERE PROBABLY BUGGED. POLICE VANS WERE OFTEN PARKED JUST DOWN THE ROAD FROM HIS HOUSE.

THESE CONDITIONS, AT LEAST IN GENERAL WAY, APPLY TO ALL OF THE BANNED IN SOUTH AFRICA. DONALD WOODS HAS ESCAPED WINNIE MANDELA AND ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-TWO OTHERS REMAIN.

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